

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 were reported in the Office Action as pending. Claims 1-6 and 10 are rejected. Claims 7 and 8 are objected to. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended. Claims 2, 3 and 7 are cancelled. Claims 9 and 11 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 4-6, 8 and 10 remain.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of pending claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC 103(a)

It is asserted in the Office Action that Claims 1, 4-6 and 10 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP-290340, in view of Arai et al., and Toshiya et al. Additionally, Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nikon, Arai and Toshiya, and further in view of Belly et al., the Examiner noting Claims 7 and 8 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, claim 1 has been amended by incorporating therein the elements of existing claims 2 and 3, but rearranging such elements to clarify the distinctions over the prior art. Claim 8 has been amended into an independent form which includes the elements of existing claims 1 and 5 so as to place claim 8 into condition for allowance.

Claims 2, 3 and 7 have been canceled.

Nikon (JP9-290340) discloses a centering apparatus for centering a lens or like circular objects. This centering apparatus of Nikon centers a circular body by pressing its outer circumference with lever members. Meanwhile, the present invention as claimed in claim 1 centers a lens by pressing the peripheral surface of the lens with pins each projecting on clamp members associated therewith, thus differing in this respect from Nikon.

Toshiya et al. (JP2003-71691) discloses a blocking apparatus which applies a bonding agent onto a lens blank to bond the same to an attaching plate 2 (corresponding to a lens holding unit). Also, Toshiya et al. teaches to bring the attaching plate closer to the lens blank until these two components have a gap of a predetermined uniform distance therebetween to thereby thin the bonding agent layer 39 down to such a predetermined thickness. The blocking apparatus of Toshiya et al. places the attaching plate 2 on a pedestal so that the lens blank is attached onto the attaching plate 2 from above. In contrast, as recited in the original claim 1, the present invention places the lens blank on a loading table so that the lens holding tool is attached onto the lens blank from above, thus differing in this respect from Toshiya.

Arai et al. (WO 01/62439) teaches a lens holder 2. Meanwhile, the blocking device of the present invention comprises a lens holding tool (lens holder), a loading table, a centering device, a dripping device, and a moving device.

In Berry et al. (US2003/0214058), the lens blank has its face (untreated face) 3 opposite its finished face 2 (to be attached to the base 19) pressed by the holding arm 36. In Toshiya et al. above, the lens blank having its circumferential surface held by the holding member 3 is pressed against the attaching plate 2.

In response, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the elements "a plurality of pins which respectively project on said clamp members to be movable in a radial direction and a circumferential direction of said loading table, said plurality of pin pressing a peripheral surface of the optical lens during centering, and

wherein said plurality of pins each comprises a locking portion at an upper end thereof which locks a peripheral edge of the optical lens on a concave surface side," None of Nikon, Toshiya et al., Arai et al., or Belly et al. teaches such pins having a structure which enable the above-described two functions as set forth in amended claim 1.

With regard to the two functions of a plurality of pins, the first function corresponds to "said plurality of pins pressing a peripheral surface of the optical lens during centering" of amended claim 1 and the second function corresponds to "said plurality of pins each comprises a locking portion at an upper end thereof which locks a peripheral edge of the optical lens on a concave surface side" of amended claim 1.

According to the present invention, the number of parts and components can be reduced in a significant level which cannot be obtained by the combination of prior art references. Therefore, the blocking device of the present invention having the foregoing elements is not taught or suggested by the cited references or any combinations thereof.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 USC 103(a) are respectively requested.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the claims pending following entry of this amendment, namely Claims 1, 4-6 and 8-11, are now in condition for allowance, which early action is requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would be useful in moving the case forward, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned at (310) 207-3800.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated:

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2/10/2010